

If my letters to Senator McCain and Senator Thompson have caused confusion, then I must and do apologize to them and to the Committee. I certainly had no intention of misleading anyone in either letter.⁸²⁷

In response to questioning from Sen. Thompson and others, Babbitt stood by the letter to McCain as true and correct, and as consistent with his letter to Thompson.⁸²⁸ Babbitt testified that both his initial denial about having said anything to Eckstein about Ickes having instructed him to issue a decision that day, and his subsequent acknowledgment to Sen. Thompson that he probably did say something to Eckstein indicating that Ickes wanted a decision, were true:

Chairman Thompson: . . . In part of your letter, the last paragraph on the first page, you said, “I must regretfully dispute Mr. Eckstein’s assertion that I told him that Mr. Ickes instructed me to issue a decision in this matter without delay.” *Is that an accurate representation?*

Secretary Babbitt: *Yes, it is.*⁸²⁹

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Chairman Thompson: . . . Did you not say that in your testimony earlier that you told Mr. Eckstein that Mr. Ickes wanted you to issue a decision?

Secretary Babbitt: I told – to the best of my recollection, I said something to Mr. Eckstein to the effect that Mr. Ickes expected or wanted a decision.⁸³⁰

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⁸²⁷Babbitt Senate Test. at 239. Babbitt also denied that the purpose of his letter to Sen. Thompson was to correct any misstatements in his earlier letter to McCain.

⁸²⁸*See, e.g.*, Babbitt Senate Test. at 244-45.

⁸²⁹*Id.* at 244 (emphasis added).

⁸³⁰*Id.* at 245.